

March 14, 2012

Dear Mr. Attorney General,

I was dismayed but not surprised to hear of the Justice Department's recent ruling which struck down the voter ID law in Texas. I simply don't understand how the Justice Department would *not* want to support a measure which ensures that the person voting is who he says he is and that there is no voter fraud. Could anyone want the fiasco which occurred in the 2000 election in Florida to happen again? I know the reason given for striking down the voter ID law was that it unfairly discriminated against minorities, but that is not true. Our state has said it will even help those who don't have photo IDs to get them.

To legally drive a car in Texas, one needs a driver's license, which has a photo on it. Come to Houston; I live here. Drive down the roads at any time of day and minorities, which I assume the Justice Department would say are blacks, Hispanics, and Asians, can be seen driving. Drive to some parts of this big city and any given minority group is the majority of drivers which one sees. Now, obviously, with our large illegal immigrant population, not all of them have a driver's licenses, but I would assume most of them do. By legal precedent, if a photo ID requirement for voting is unfair, isn't it unfair for a photo ID to be required for a driver's license? Why hasn't the Department of Justice knocked down that requirement too?

I had surgery a couple of months ago and the morning of check in for the surgery I was required to show a photo ID. If needing a photo ID unfairly discriminates against minorities for voting, then doesn't it do the same for minorities who need surgery? Why hasn't the Justice Department stepped in and struck down that requirement here in Texas – or elsewhere – too? Yet there were Hispanics waiting in the surgery check-in room too. I heard none of them speaking up that the photo ID was an unfair requirement.

Even when using a doctor in an HMO or PPO health care system, a photo ID is required the first time. It is Xeroxed and kept on file with the medical records.

I flew out of town last December and had to show a photo ID to pass through security. If showing a photo ID unfairly discriminates against minorities for voting, why doesn't it do the same for those wanting to get on an airplane? Why did the Justice Department just pick the voter ID law to strike down? Yet the airport was filled with people – Hispanics and blacks among them – waiting to fly.

I have traveled overseas and obviously needed a passport with a photo in it. But under the Justice Department's recent decision for the voter ID law here in Texas, that unfairly discriminates against minorities. Come visit one of our airports here in Houston, and see how many minorities you see traveling. I have never heard any mention how unfair it is that he or she needed a photo ID for the passport.

I attend a Hispanic church where Spanish is spoken. In twelve years I have never heard one person mention that it was unfair that a photo ID was required for driving, for getting through security, for getting a passport, for enrolling in an HMO, or for having surgery. Nor have I ever heard anyone in my church say that he or she could not do one of those things

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because a photo ID was required. I'm part Native American, yet I don't feel unfairly discriminated against because I have to have a photo ID to do any of these things.

Our government has criticizes other countries when we see unfair elections take place, such as happened in Russia recently or Afghanistan a while back. Ensuring elections are fair and honest, that all votes are counted, and that cheating doesn't go on is the mandate of every state. Once again, the 2000 presidential election surely showed that to be true.

When our Justice Department makes these kinds of rulings It makes me lose support for this administration. If minorities are not discriminated against when photo IDs are needed for driver licenses, for going through security in airports, for getting passports, for enrolling in HMOs, or for having surgery, then why is it suddenly unfair to ask for them when voting? I respectfully ask the Justice Department to reconsider its decision.

Sincerely,

*William Hall*

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